Interview with
Edward Botler, Manager
Riverside Agricultural ~~Association~~, Mexican National Camp
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Question: In your observation in the type of men who have been into your camp, would you say that you are now getting a different type than you used to get, in terms of their education, appearance, health and so forth. In other words, is the bracero program having a desirable effect upon the people in Mexico?

Answer: There can be no doubt that it is having a big effect in many ways on the economy, on the health and so forth. Just to give you an idea, there is a town in Sonora called Ciudad Obregon, where I go every year on my vacation. When I started going and back in 1940, it was just a wide place in the road with maybe 300 population; in 1950 I understand the official census was 50,000 and I am sure that is now 75,000. But, on this question of, who is learning what from whom; it is important to note that we have important things to learn from the Nationals. At the same time that they have important things to learn from us.

Question: Could you give me an example of what you have in mind.

Answer: Well, for one thing, these men are highly devoted to their families and we could profit from taking an example from them. I happen to know how they feel about their families, because I send the money-orders down to Mexico. Just last week, for example, there was a fellow who sent $200 to his family and they talked to me about how much they miss their wives and children. Oh, sure, every once in awhile you will come across a "bad egg" who abandons his family and takes up with another woman, but this rather rare and I would say that you could put down that 90 or 95% ov the men we get here are model family men.

Question: How about religion? Does a priest come into the camp here or do you have a chapel here?

Answer: No, we do not permit any of that. I had the local priest come to me and ask if he could come in here and give services, but I told hime to "get the hell out" I said if we permitted one of them to come in, all the other demominations and sects, and there are hundreds of them you know, would be demanding the privileges. The place would be a madhouse. They would keep the men in a turmoil and of course, all of themwould be taking up collections. So I have laid down the policy that none of them can come in. Now if a man wants to go into twon Sunday morning to go to church there is nothing I can do to stop him. In fact the priest asked me if they could send transportation out to take the men into town and I said to him, "go ahead, I don't give a damn."

Question: Are the men permitted to have their own cars here in camp?

Answer: No. We have a policy on that also. If a man wants to buy a car and park outside the gates, once again there is nothing I can do to stop him. But ~~when~~ I am not going to allow them to race around the camp here and you can easily understand why. These men have no conception of driver's license, they have no conception of insurance, so if somebody got killed or hurt here in camp I woul be responsible. We might have all sorts of lawsuits on our hands.

Question: Now I would like to ask you about the health facilities you have here and the extent to which the men use them. Do you have a doctor coming in here everyday at a regular hour?

Answer: Yes, there is a local doctor who comes into camp everyday. for sick-call usually in the morning. Sometimes if he is tied up with an emergency in town, he is not able to get here until the afternoon, but all the men have to do is tell our man, Mr. Rubio, that they want to see the doctor and he sees that they do.

Question: Is the doctor Spanish speaking?

Answer: No.

Question: Do you have a Spanish speaking nurse on duty?

Answer: No. We don't feel that we have a large enough camp to justify keeping a nurse here. If the insurance company wanted to have one here, of course, we would have no objections. But as things stand we would have to pay for that ourselves and the Association does not feel that it would be worthwhile. Some of the other larger associations have gone in for this sort of thing, I believe.

Question: How can the men tell the doctor what is wrong with them then, and what can he tell them to do about it?

Answer: Our man, Rubio, is always there and he interprets.

Question: Do the men seem satisfied with the medical care they receive?

Answer: By and large, yese, one thing you will note is that they always insist on having an injection. They seem to feel that nothing besides a shot is going to go them any good. So if the doctor gives them pills they may smile at him and nod their heads, but as soon as they get outside the dispensary door they look at those pills in their hand and say "~~Pinkpills~~ pink pills, phooey!" and they trow them on the ground.

Question: Do the men have to go to this doctor or are they free to go as they wish?

Answer: Sure, ~~they~~ we take them into town all the time to see eye, ear, nose, and throat specialists or some other kind of specialist. When they have back trouble, we often take them to a chiropractor, because he seems to do them more good and they really go for this kind of treatment. They feel that when someone lays hands on them that this means that they are going to get well.